

10/564,304  
AmA 10/20/08

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

On page 1 immediately following the title, please insert a heading as follows:

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The heading on page 1, line 4 has been changed as follows:

~~Description:~~ Field of the Invention

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The paragraphs beginning on page 1, line <sup>5</sup>~~6~~ have been changed as follows:

The invention relates to a method for separating letters in which irregularly spaced and disordered piles of letters that are being transported on a conveyor belt are rendered into a continuous stream of letters that are largely not lying on top of each other and that are distributed virtually homogeneously over the conveyor belt. Moreover, the invention ~~comprises~~ relates to a device that is suitable for carrying out the method.

**Related Technology**

An automated separation and sorting line usually ~~comprises~~ includes a conveyor belt onto which ~~the~~ boxes or sacks that are delivered at irregular intervals are emptied, as a result of which irregularly spaced and disordered piles of letters are formed on the conveyor belt.

The letters arranged on the conveyor belt in such a way are then normally fed to one or more successive ~~separation means~~ separators with the objective of rendering the above-mentioned arrangement of the letters ~~consisting~~ made up of disordered piles into an arrangement that ~~consists~~ is made up of letters that are largely not lying on top of each other and that are situated virtually homogeneously on the conveyor belt, thus corresponding to a continuous stream of letters that are largely not lying on top of each other and that are distributed virtually homogeneously on the conveyor belt.

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An arrangement of ~~separation means~~ a separator for separating letters is described in U.S. Pat. No. 2,905,309, especially in Figure 1 ~~of said publication~~ thereof. In the disclosed arrangement, the letters initially reach a first conveyor belt via an inclined plane, whereby ~~said the~~ conveyor belt conveys the letters to a second conveyor belt via a swing tray that exerts an influence on the regulation of the conveyor belt. This second conveyor belt feeds the letters to another ~~separation means~~ separator that ~~consists of~~ includes a rotating drum with protruding thin strips or "fingers" that pull or push the letters individually off the conveyor belt and into a shaft. The drum is installed above the conveyor belt crosswise to the conveying direction in such a way that the strips can touch the conveyor belt and the drum in the described device rotates in such a way that the strips move in the conveying direction whenever they are below the axis of rotation.

The described arrangement and especially the transport via the swing tray that influences the regulation of the conveyor belt is carried out with the same objective as that of the method according to the invention, but ~~[[it]]~~ is very complex. Moreover, in case of a high mail volume, it can happen that letters lying on the tray are pushed off by the subsequent letters so that the conveyor belt can no longer be regulated so as to be adapted to the mail volume and an overload of the system can occur.

On page 2, line 22 please insert a heading as follows:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION